# new mexico architect

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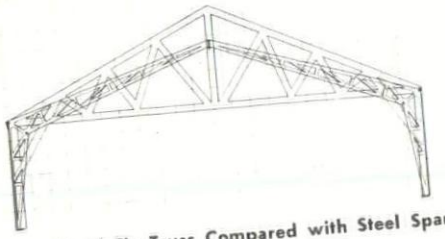

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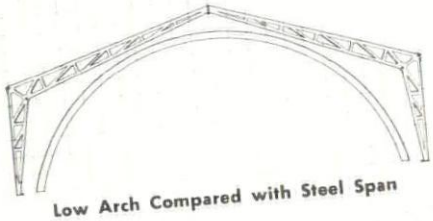

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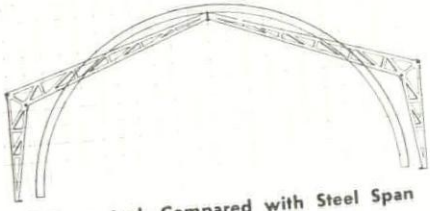

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*the new mexico architect • volume 1 • number 7 • november 1959*


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## notes and news from the president

*Since the Western Mountain Conference concluded on 10 October, I have attempted to relax to some extent, with an effort pointed towards the general practice of Architecture. It's not quite that simple. I find my subconscious constantly reflecting the events of the conference, which to me, were so outstanding, as conferences go. The fellowship that prevailed to me was quite significant and points definitely to a relationship that is, and should be, between all of us, as Architects, one that carries on an air of integrity that merits the dignity of the profession.*

*The Conference Speakers, notwithstanding, are of the highest type; their messages were most outstanding and certainly accomplished what the speakers meant for them to, as much discussion resulted, among those attending, on the subject matter, and by the time all had spoken our heads were crammed with new thoughts and all pointing to the necessity of the Architect to direct, at least in part, his thinking and effort towards research and the sciences as it pertains to Architecture.*

*Certainly our Conference Program was interesting to many as was indicated by the presence of such men as Mr. Harry Gerstin, Manager of the Plastics Division, American Latex Products Corporation, of Hawthorne, California; Mr. William M. Rice, American Institute of Physics, Project on Design of Physics Buildings, New York, N. Y.; Mr. Robert L. Corsbie, Director Civil Effects Test Organization, Division of Biology and Medicine, U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Washington, D. C.; and Colonel C. A. Eckert, Director of Installations Engineering School, Air Force Institute of Technology, Air University, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton ,Ohio. Mr. March P. Rainaut, Architect D.P.L.G., Paris, France, arrived in time to enjoy the fellowship of the group at the concluding banquet. Then, too, to add tremendously to the dignity of the conference, we had our beloved Edmund R. Purves, Executive Director of the Institute with us.*

*An incident worthy of note, as to the Chapter and the Committee on Public Relations, occurring recently, was that the Chapter was called upon to furnish a program at the Rotary Club luncheon at Clayton, New Mexico. Your president, along with Phil Register, as Public Relations Chairman, complied and did furnish the program. A report on this activity occurs elsewhere in these pages.*

*Again in the view of public relations, your president has accepted an invitation to participate in a Conference of School Administrators to be held in July, 1960, and sponsored by the State Department of Education. This came about through correspondence between Mr. LaMoine Langston, Director of School Plant Planning, and myself; initiated, however, by Mr. Langston. A committee will be appointed to work with Mr. Langston quite soon and as appropriate, the committee will make interim reports. I will be out of the chair by the time the conference is held but it is hoped that my successor will give me a "bit" part in the show.*

**W. Miles Brittelle, Sr., President**
**New Mexico Chapter, AIA**

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### a few notes on the new mexico architect

Perhaps it would be well, with the beginning of a new editorship, to state once again the major reason for the publication of the *New Mexico Architect* by the New Mexico Chapter of the A.I.A. The goal of this publication is to encourage people to become more conscious of architecture and the architectural profession. At least in part it seeks to accomplish this purpose by presenting the outstanding contributions which have been and are being made by members of the profession. Its methods of attaining this goal will remain flexible and open to the injection of new ideas and change. For the present there will be certain features which will appear in each issue. These will include "Notes and News from the President," "Notes on Readings," "Projects and Buildings," and "Report from the University." It is planned to add a regular feature called "A Glimpse into the Past." The popular series of articles, "Portrait of an Architect," will be expanded and will appear from time to time in future issues. Eventually, too, a section will be set aside for "Communications," for those who may wish to express themselves on a subject or who wish to take issue with particular articles. It is hoped that the magazine will never become completely solidified into a set form and that members of the profession will continually give suggestions and ideas which can become a part of this publication.

### news

Miles Brittelle, Sr., and Philippe Register presented the A.I.A. film, "A School for Johnnie," to the Clayton Rotary Club at their weekly luncheon meeting Oct. 22. The film was followed by a talk by Mr. Brittelle expanding on some of the points brought out in the film. There followed a short question and answer period. It is hoped that this film showing will be followed by others, and that service clubs, school boards and any groups interested in what constitutes architectural services and how to start a building project, will contact the New Mexico Chapter of the A.I.A. The Public Relations Committee will be glad to make films and speakers available.

## notes on readings

In examining the virtual barrage of architectural books which has bombarded the profession and the public since 1945, it would be worth while to pause for a moment and somehow to assess this phenomenon. In merely analyzing the titles of these many publications it is apparent that they fall into three rather distinct groups. Probably the largest number of these are the purely technical studies, addressed exclusively to members of the architectural profession or allied fields. These books discuss problems such as acoustics and new structural systems, and outline various solutions which have been arrived at for various building types: motels, parking garages, schools and the like. Although books of this type contain a certain amount of text and occasionally mathematical formulas, they are primarily picture-books, and as such they have obviously replaced the office files of old, which held drawings and photographs of Classical, Medieval or Renaissance buildings which could serve as sources of "inspiration" for the eclectic architecture prevalent in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The second group of books are popular picture-books basically addressed to the lay public. These picture-books of houses and other buildings carry on a long tradition of such publications, a tradition which in America reaches back into the eighteenth century. As in the more technical books, textural matter is of little importance and probably is very seldom read. The story is told almost exclusively with dramatic color or black and white photographs and accompanied by only a minimum of architectural drawings. This reliance on photographs and the consequent exclusion of writing is the one facet which distinguishes these books from similar publications of the nineteenth century. These popular picture-books are obviously geared to the time-worn *slogan,* "a picture equals a thousand words."

The last category of contemporary books on architecture are critical and historical studies of architecture, past and present. Needless to say, the number of books published in this area is extremely limited, and even of the few which are finally published there are, perhaps, only a dozen or so which are worthy of serious attention. One does not have to search out the reason for the limited quantity of critical studies of architecture in obscure nooks and crannies. The dearth of such writings is due to the general lack of intellectualism which seems to pervade our contemporary American society. It is unfortunately a rare individual who has been trained to comprehend and critically appraise any such studies. Yet, long after the technical publications and picture books have fallen by the wayside, the significant critical studies of our contemporary architectural scene will retain their value through their essential significance and vigor.

*continued—page 18* **readings**


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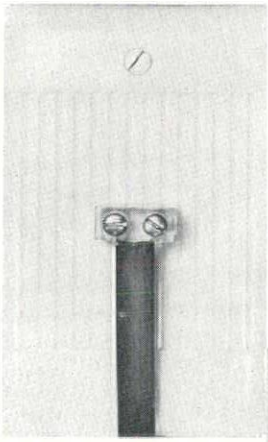
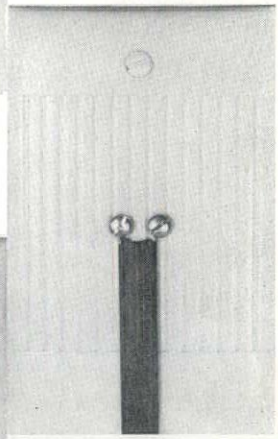
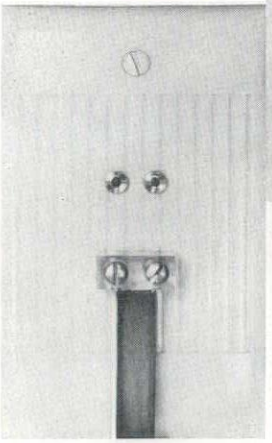


*Left: Tele-Jac Model No. S-100 Deluxe TV outlet plate with plug*

*Right: Tele-Jac Model No. D-100 Deluxe TV outlet plate (no plug)*





*Left: Tele-Jac Model No. S-2T Deluxe TV outlet plate with two sets of terminals, one plug*

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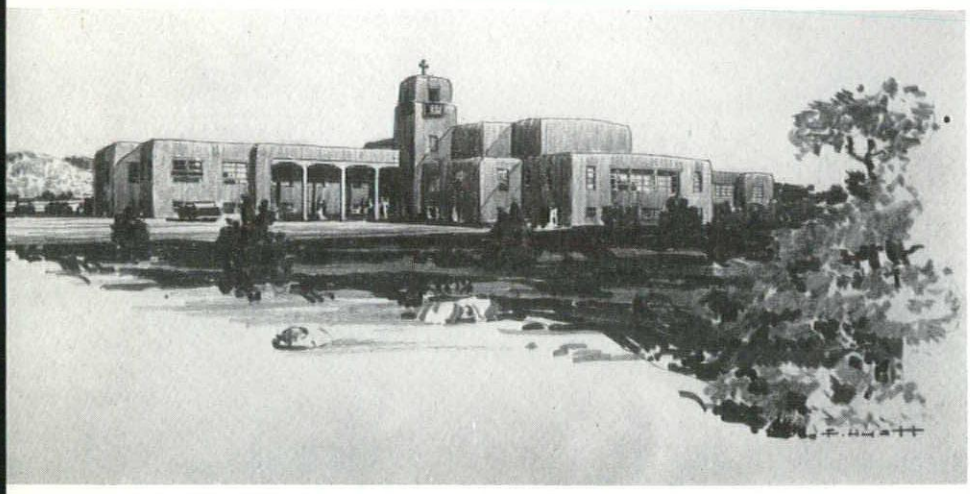
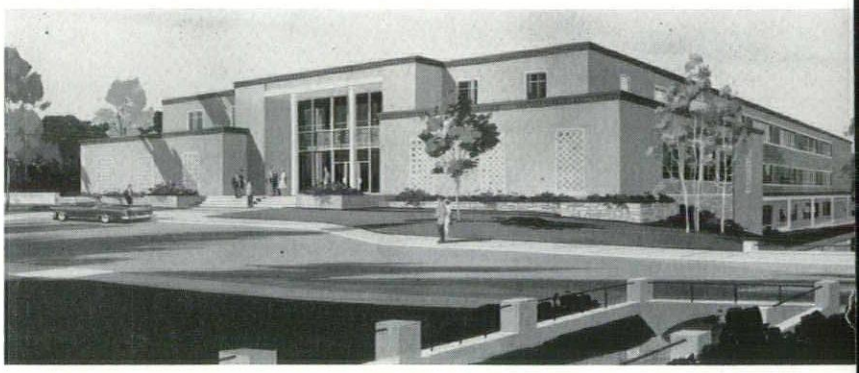
A Note: This feature of the **N.M.A.** will be devoted to buildings which are in the preliminary stages of planning or have been let for contract, but have not as yet been built. All architects are requested and urged to send the basic data about their current projects accompanied if possible with rendering and/or site plans. As many as possible of these projects will be published in each monthly issue of the magazine. The success of this feature of the **N.M.A.** will only be possible if the members of the profession actively cooperate in providing information about their current work.

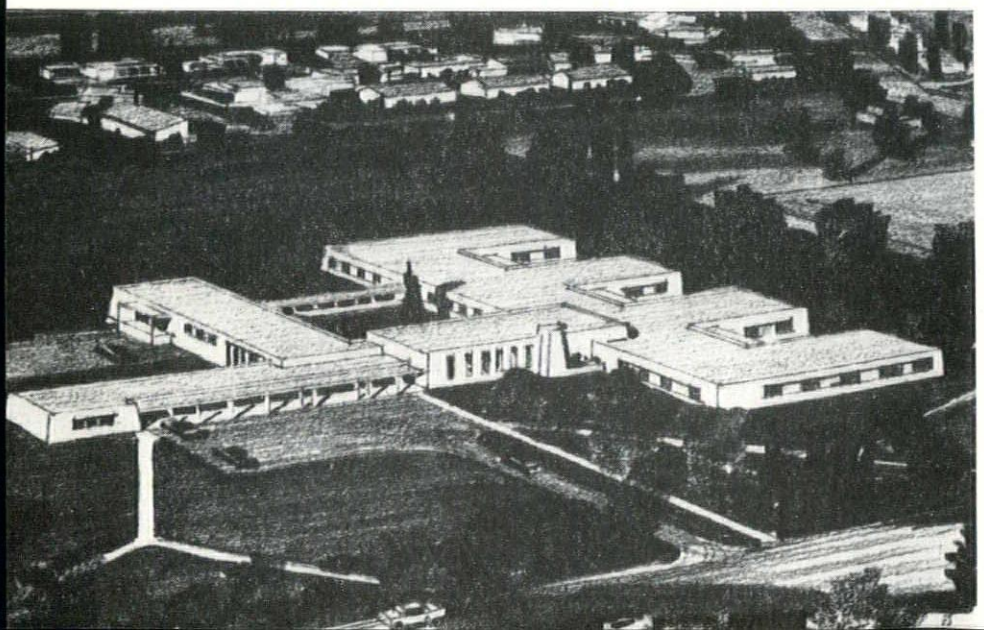


*Meem, Holien, Buckley and Associates, architects*
*First Baptist Church, Santa Fe, New Mexico*
*This new church building is to be located on the east side of the Las Vegas-Santa Fe Highay, upon the Camino Lejo hill. The principle entrance to the church is from the east side through a long portal which will connect the three basic units of the buildings. These separate, but connected units will consist of a church which is planned eventually to seat 500 persons, a beginner school wing on the north, and to the south an educational section for older students. The plan is so conceived that future additions can be built on all units. The structure of the exterior walls will be non-bearing masonry walls with interior steel columns and roof joists. The roof will be reinforced concrete, below which will be placed a suspended acoustic ceiling. The initial construction will entail a total of 17,500 square feet. Bids for the project will be opened in mid-October.*





*W. C. Kruger and Associates, architects*
*New Mexico State Land Office Building, Santa Fe*
*A large, 60,000 square foot office building constructed of reinforced concrete with pan-joist construction. The exterior walls are stuccoed with brick parapets. Contracts for the building will be let in October and construction will begin in 1960.*



*Kenneth S. Clark and Philippe Register, architects*
*Congregate Home and Retirement Residences*
*for the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,*
*Santa Fe, New Mexico*
*The site for the Congregate Home and Retirement Residences is that of the Allison-James School, most of which is being demolished for the new buildings. The Congregate Home will occupy the southern portion of the eleven-acre property. Its principal element will consist of forty single rooms, each with half bath, plus dining room, kitchen facility, several lounges, six bedrooms for in-living staff personnel, and a staff lounge. The structure will be a traditional pueblo style and will be all on one level. The plan is of a spread-out nature permitting the use of many walks, patios and covered area-ways. The master plan for a total of twenty-five retirement residences which will be located on the north end of the property; however the present building program calls for construction of only five two-bedroom residences. Bids for the project will be taken in November of this year.*

## report from the university

*Don P. Schlegel*
*Assoc. Prof. of Architecture*
*University of New Mexico*

Who is responsible for our residential architecture — the architect, the builder or the home-buyer?

A recent survey of building construction clearly indicates the lack of participation on the part of the architects in this field. The survey listed sixty-six million dollars worth of construction in Albuquerque in 1958. Of this total, forty-five million dollars were in housing of which seven hundred and fifty thousand were architecturally designed. This means that just 1.7 percent of all money spent for housing was the direct responsibility of architects. If we reduce this to housing units, the architects designed nineteen units out of a total of four thousand, three hundred and twenty-two.

The questions I would like to raise at this point are: Can the builder continue to disregard the knowledge and ability of the architect in this vital area of our visual environment? Can the architect continue to disregard two-thirds of the total amount of construction —housing? Can the home-buyer continue to disregard the advantages of architectural services?

I feel very strongly that neither the builder, nor the architect, nor the home-buyer can continue as they are today. It is evident that they must appreciate each other's difficulties for their own salvation. No one group is responsible for our present situation. The blame must be divided.

The builder today prefers to hire a drainage expert for his site plan and to send a draftsman to the West Coast to take photographs of the best selling houses for his design inspiration — hence the Hansel and Gretel houses in Albuquerque. His general feeling is that architectural service is an additional cost of no additional value.

The architect usually has failed to grasp the problems of the builder's house and has shown a great lack of interest in the custom house. He has at times disregarded material costs, erection procedures, unit changes and has failed to understand the mass market. He has often turned away the home-buyer on the basis that his production costs would be too high to show any profit on a house of less than fifty thousand dollars.

*continued—page 16* **university**

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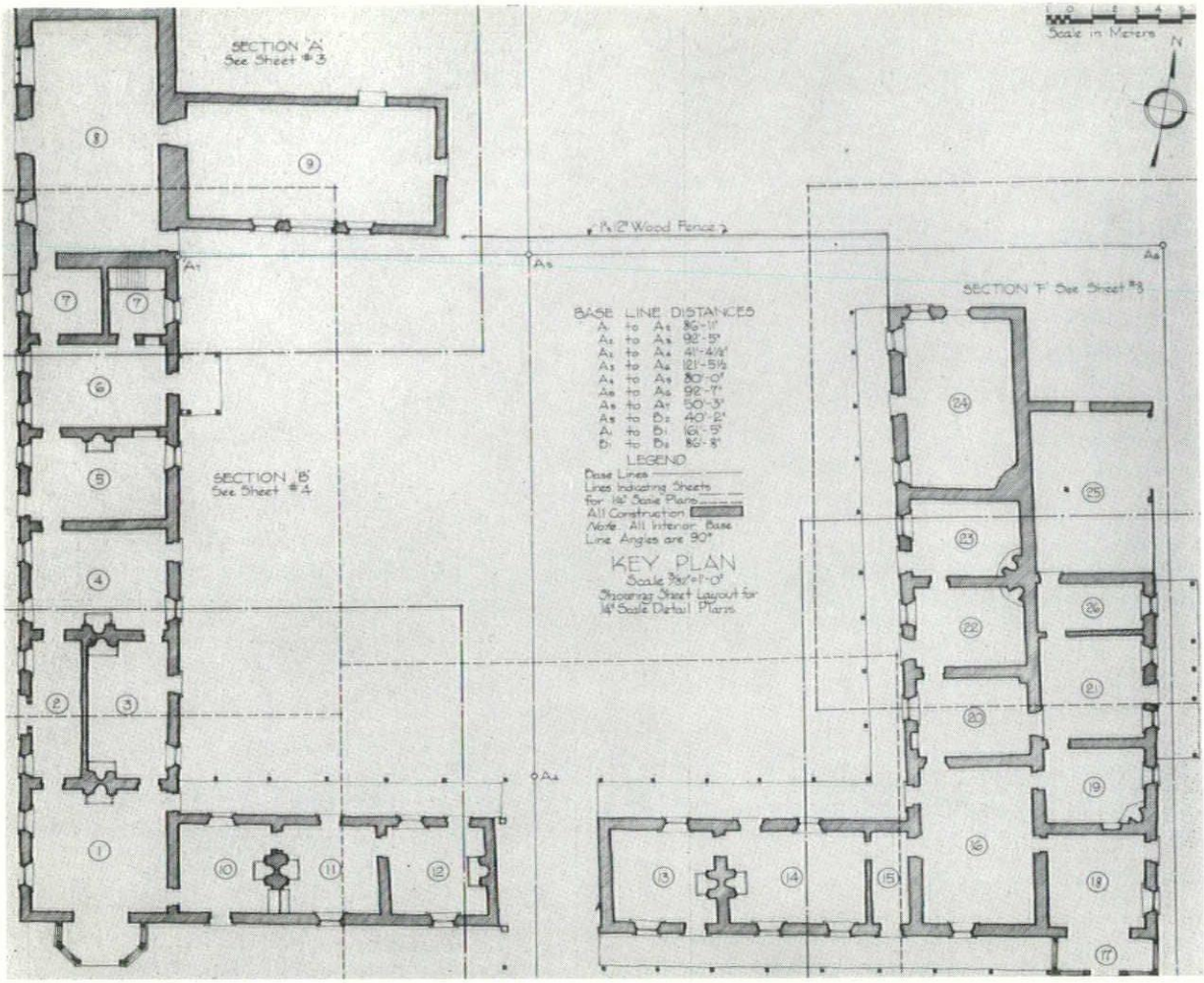


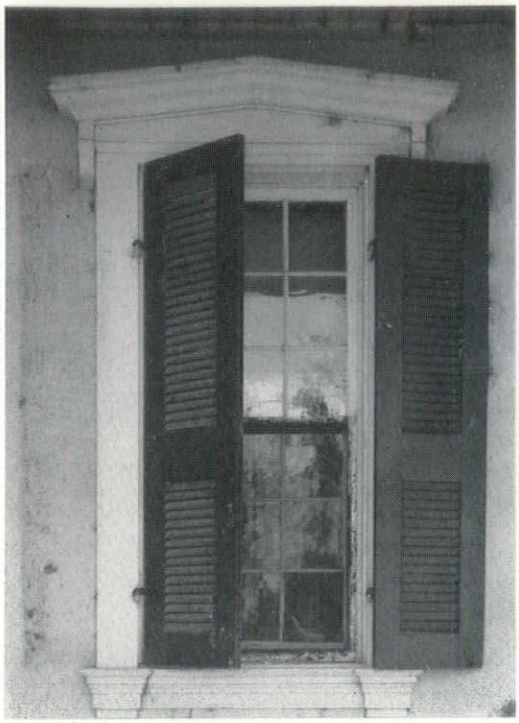


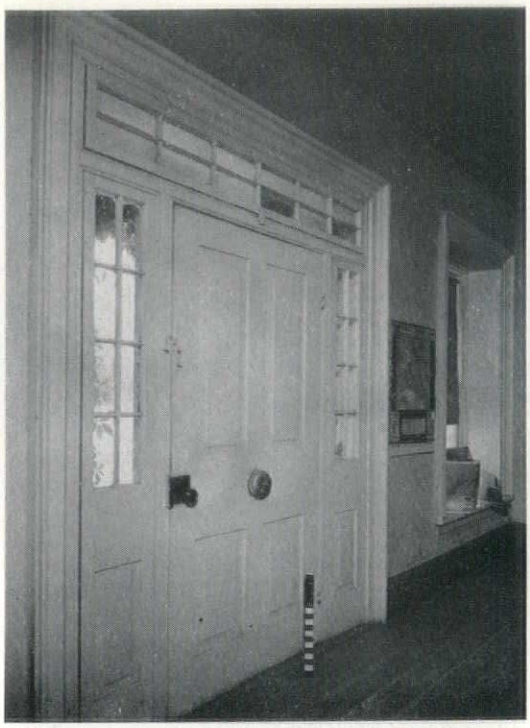

## A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST ——The Watrous House

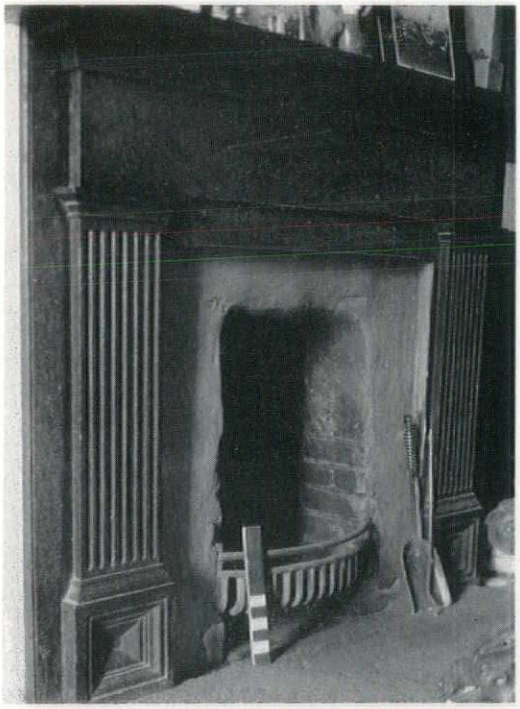
*I am certain that we would all agree that in our present world of rapid change it would be advantageous for us to pause occasionally to re-examine our own ideas and contributions as well as those of our contemporary scene in general. The past, through its ideas and material remains, offers us one of the best means of accomplishing this goal. "A Glimpse into the Past" will seek to present significant examples of New Mexico's architectural past. The regional as well as non-regional characteristics of these older buildings should enable us to approach our own architecture with a new understanding and humility.*

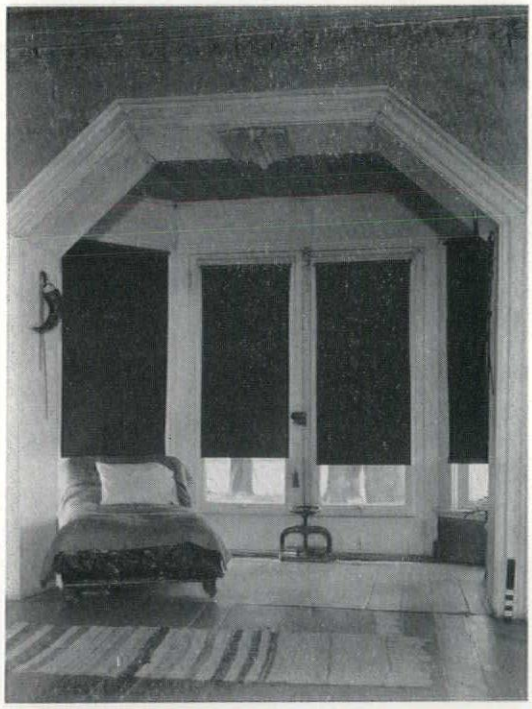
*The first of these historic buildings is the well-known Watrous house located on the Mora River near the small northern New Mexico community of Watrous. The adobe house was constructed around 1841, by Samuel Watrous, but the present structure is a result of many additions and modifications. In its detailing and general plan, this house is a classic example of the Territorial Style of Architecture. Characteristic of early houses in the Southwest is the basically "U" shaped plan of the structure which is gained by a "Zaguan" which in this house serves to completely separate the west and east wings from each other. What stamps this building as territorial is the fascinating manner in which a rather sophisticated Greek Revival detailing of the windows, doors, and fireplaces has been played off against the underlying folk tradition of the structure itself.*

*Credit: Drawings and photographs of this house were made available for publication through the kindness of John Gaw Meem and the American Historical Building Survey of the National Park Service. The drawings were made in 1940, by Raymond Lovelady, under the direction of Mr. Meem and Leicester Hyde.*



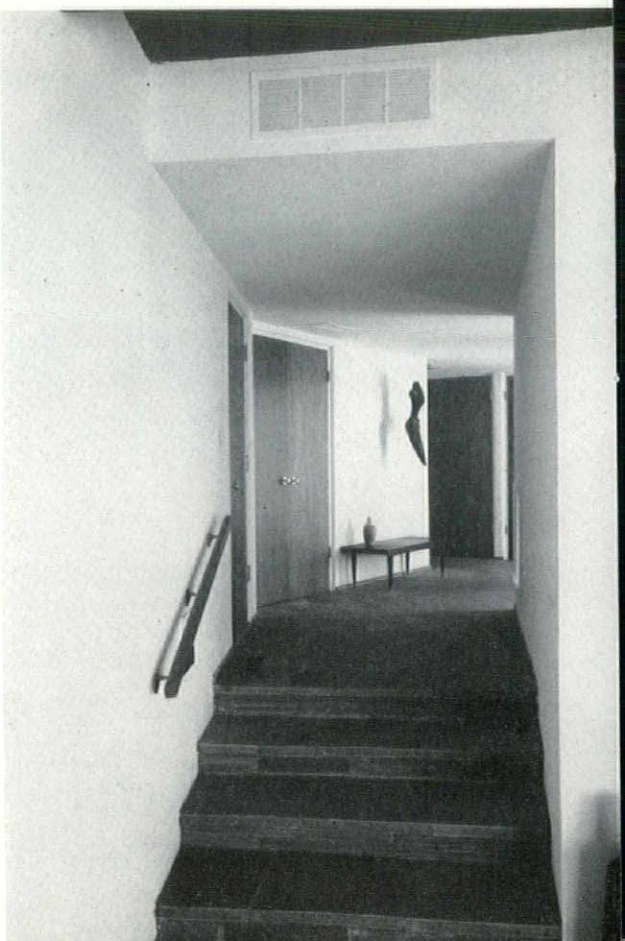






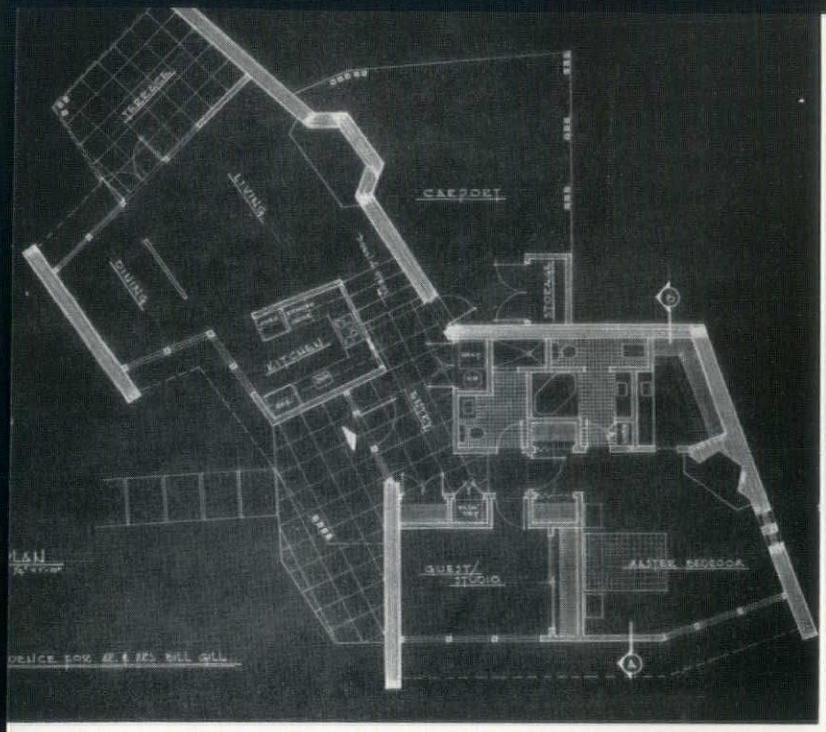
As Professor Schilegel has aptly indicated in his accompanying **Report from the University,** the percentage of houses which are presently being designed by architects constitutes a decidedly small percentage of the total dwelling units which are being built every year. There can be little doubt that the generally low level of quality present in the site planning and in the design of individual units in most mass housing projects is due to the absence from the scene of the professional architect. It is extremely difficult at present to see how the architect is to inject himself into the field of mass housing. Generally, those architects who have been able to enter this area of mass housing have been able to do so only when they have been able to convince those who finance and contract projects that they can offer designs which will be as inexpensive as those which they are now offering, or because the quality of design will make it more saleable than those which they have previously been building. In other words his arguments have had to be on the level of business and saleability and nothing else. Although extremely important, the economics of housing is after all only one aspect of the whole problem. We are becoming increasingly aware that the site planning and design of our communities is integrally bound up with the growth or degeneration of our sociological, psychological and spiritual outlook. The objective evidence which is daily being accumulated to support this latter contention is of necessity bringing increased pressure to bear on our society to suggest at least a tentative solution to the problem. Unfortunately those who have advocated some sort of an answer to the problem of mass housing have felt that it can come about only through the action of federal and state governments. Local or national governmental organizations may well be the only social agencies which can solve the problem; but if this is the case it does not augur well for the future of democracy, the development of a meaningful individualism or of architecture in America.





**Kenneth S. Clark and Philippe Register, Architects**

*House for Mr. and Mrs. Bill Gill, Santa Fe, 1958*
*The Gill house is located on a ridge which gives a broad view of the Sandia Mountains to the south and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the north. To a considerable extent the plan of the house was a result of these views and the desire to shut out the cold wind from the northwest. The house is of frame construction, which in part is stuccoed on the outside and generally plastered on the interior. The house is heated by a forced air perimeter heating system with return ducts in the furred-down corridor ceiling. The cost of the house was less than $23,000. The preliminary drawings were conceived by the architects, and the final working drawings and construction was accomplished by Allen Stamm and Associates. (photos: Sperry-Tyler Dingee)*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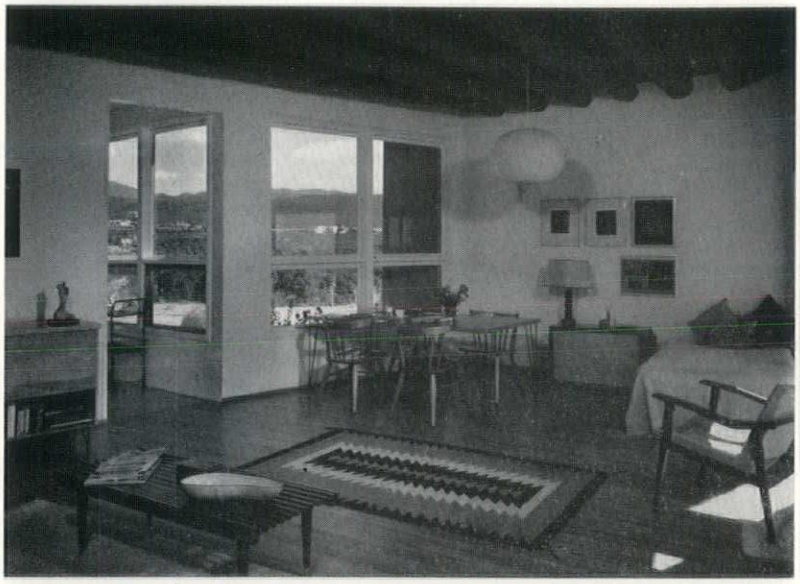
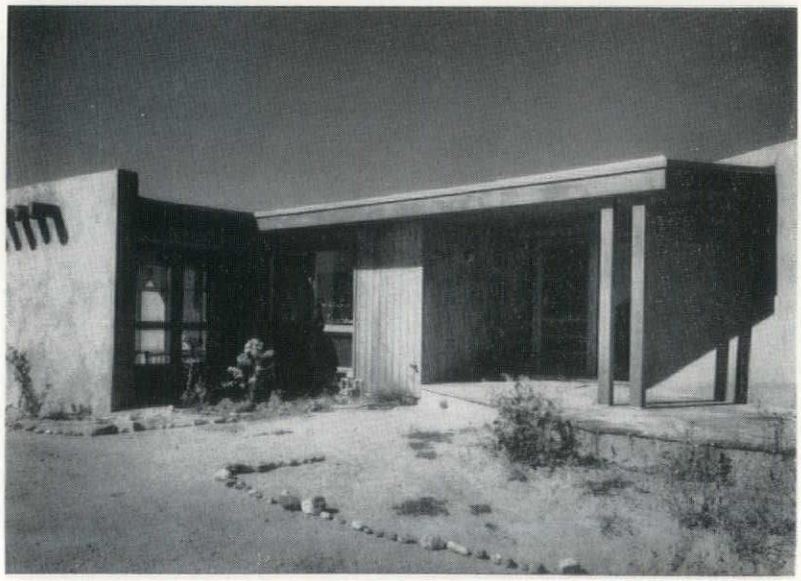
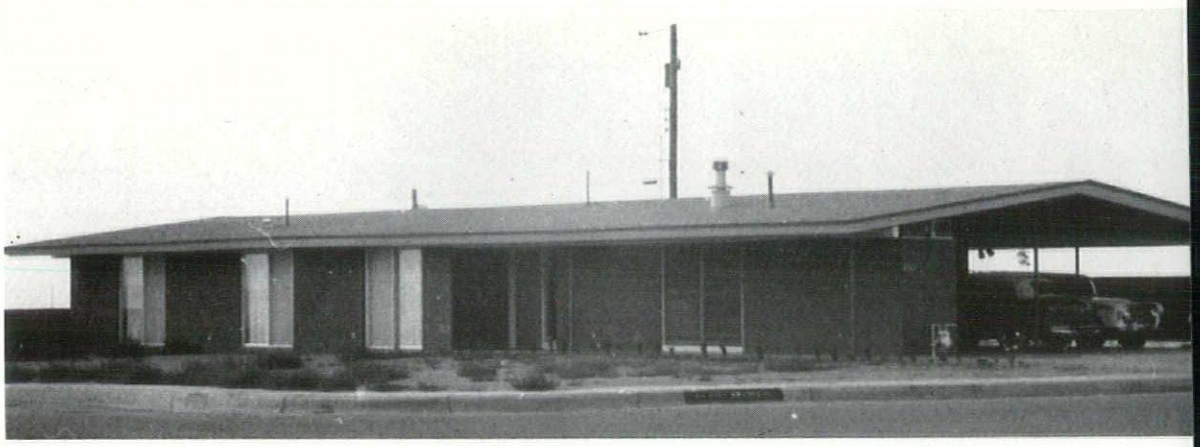
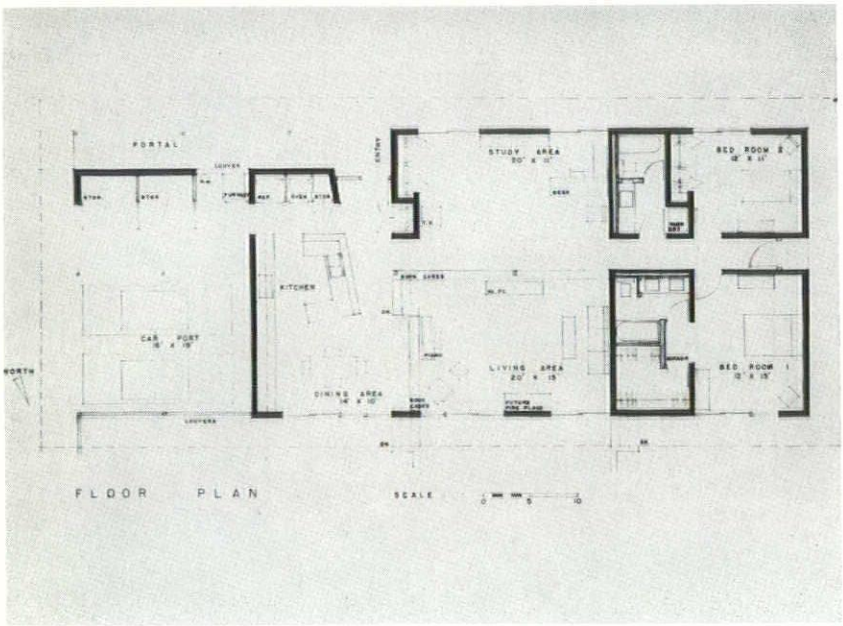




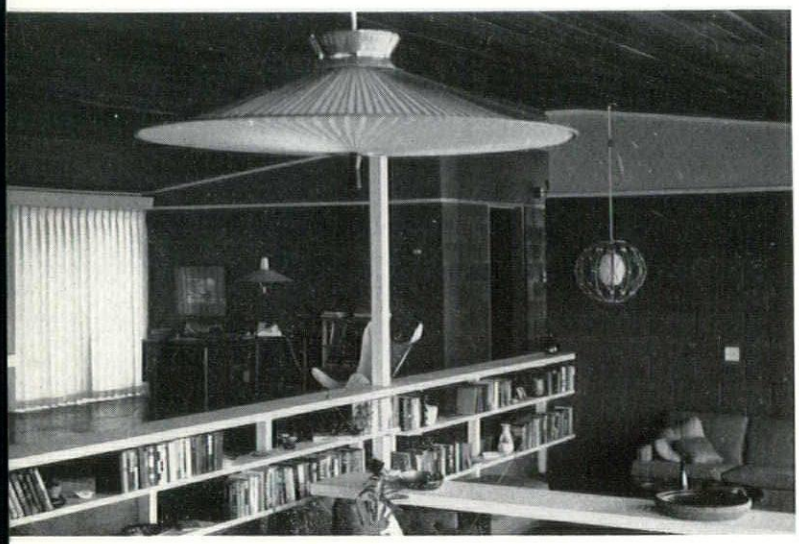


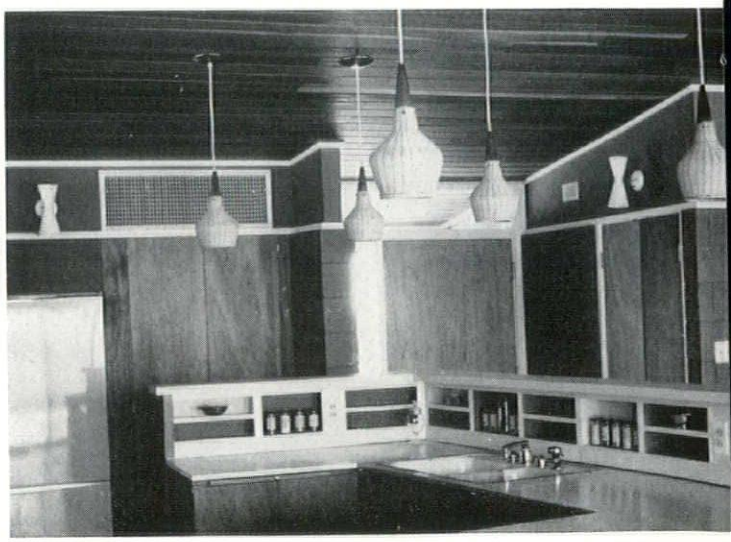





**Don P. Schlegel, Architect**

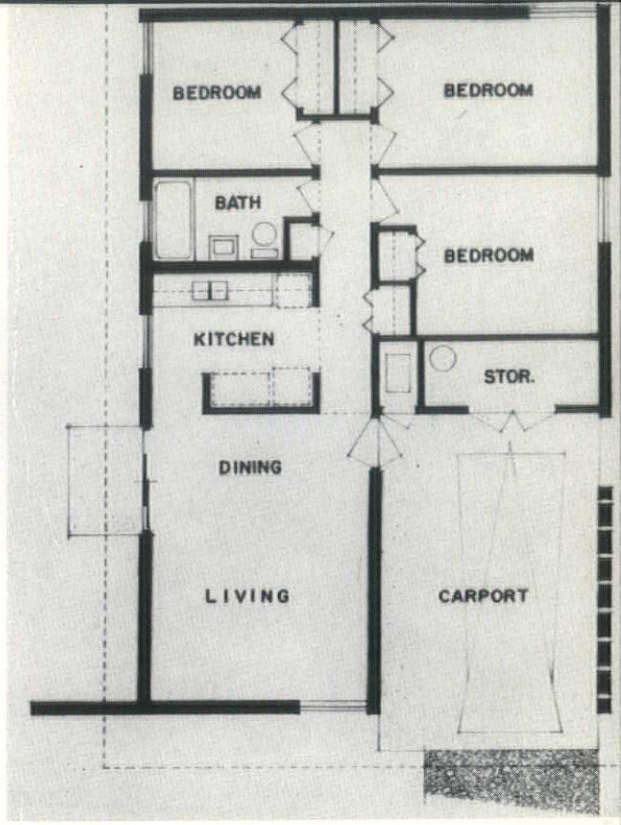
*House, Albuquerque, 1959*
*This custom designed house was completed in May of this year. The house consists of one large space which has been spatially divided into a study area, dining space, kitchen and sunken living room. The remainder of the house contains two bed rooms, each with its own bath, a storage area, a large carport and an entrance portal. The interior space encloses 2000 square feet; the roof which is designed as a broad umbrella, shelters 3300 square feet. The house was financed through FHA and cost $10 per square foot of enclosed space; $6 a square foot of space under the roof. This cost includes patio, refrigerator and washer-dryer, but not the property.*

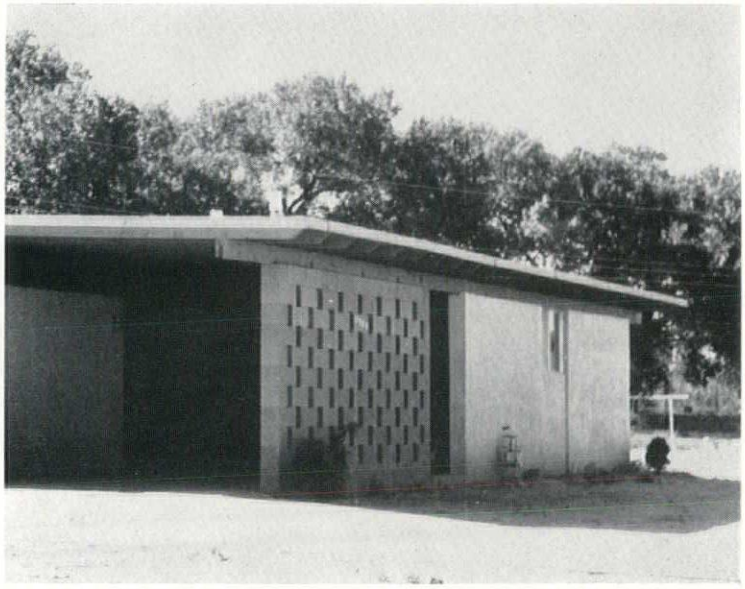




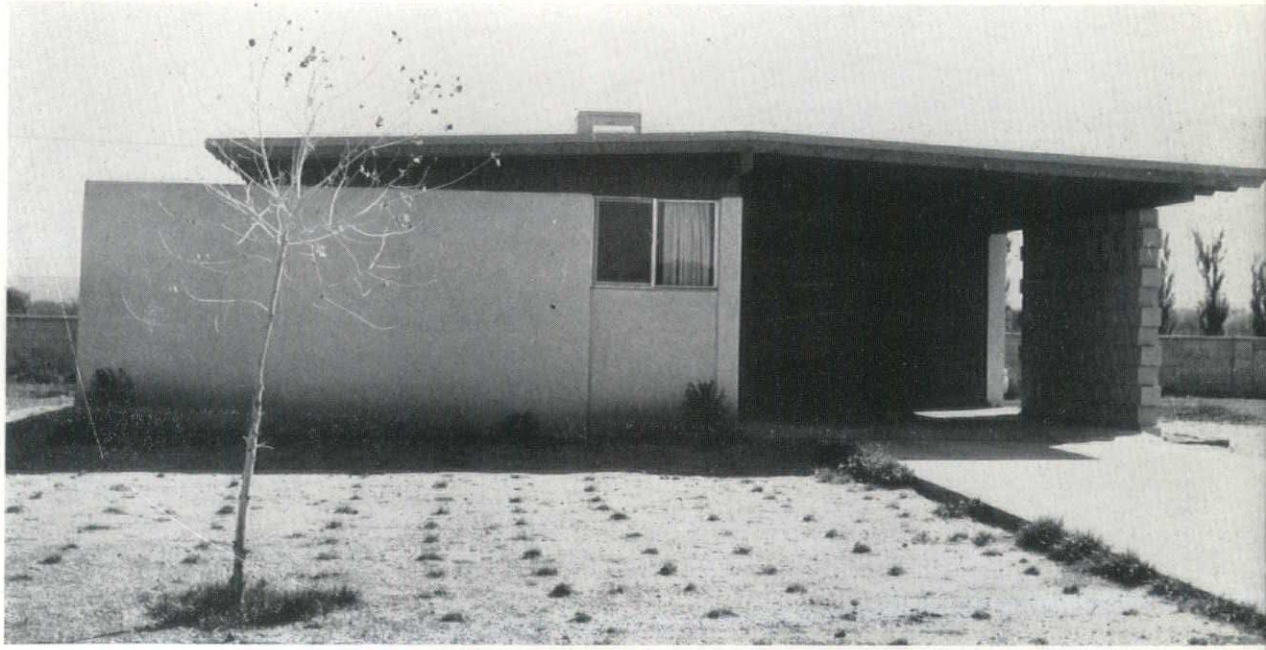
**John Reed, Architect**

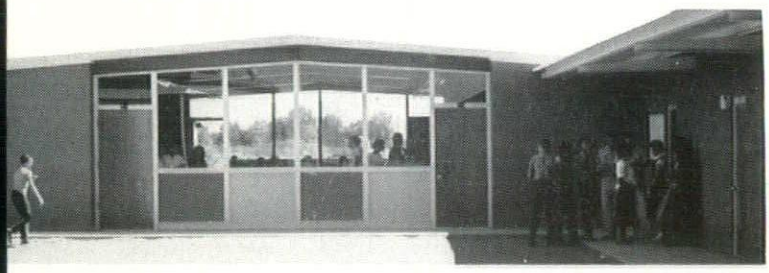
*Project house for San-Bar Construction Co., Albuquerque, 1959 This house, together with several plan variations, was designed by the architect for a builder's project in the Rio Grande Valley, directly south of Albuquerque. The typical house contains a combined living and dining area, a kitchen, bath, three bedrooms, carport and a paved patio to the rear or side. Construction is of masonry on a concrete slab; heating is forced air and all window units are metal. These houses were designed to sell for $9,000, which included an 80 x 125 foot lot.*









*Deming, New Mexico, High School*
*Truman J. Mathews, Architect*

## All-Steel Schools Coming Trend

NEW YORK — The urgent need for immediate classroom space to meet the ever-increasing flow of school-bound children has developed a trend in the construction of all steel schools that can be erected in as little as 90 days.

Steelways, official publication of American Iron and Steel Institute, says the trend, which was initiated by San Bernardino, Calif., in 1956, is spreading throughout the country.

The publication says the all-steel schools, which are designed by noted architects and top steel engineers, are erected in a fraction of the time conventional structures demand. It asserts they are actually superior acoustically and easy to heat and cool.

Steelways also says they will seemingly last forever and require less maintenance. And although they are beautiful and permanent buildings, they can be picked up if needed and moved across town.

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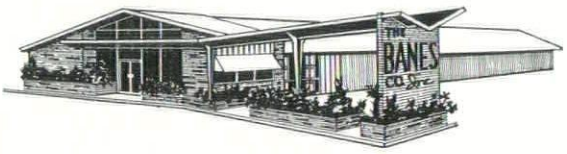


BUTLER




**university** —*continued from page 9*

The home-buyer usually is not concerned with good design when purchasing a house. His only concern appears to be the amount of the down payment. When shopping for architectural services, he bases his decision on minimum fees, disregarding the fact that as the fee decreases, so does the amount of detail in the drawings and specifications making it more difficult for the contractor to submit an accurate bid.

How can we bridge this gap between the architecture we *can* build and that which is being built today?

I have no startling solution, but, instead, turn to education. I feel that only through education are we going to see great changes in this direction. The architectural schools throughout the country realize this responsibility and every effort is being made to increase the architectural education of all the people.

At the University of New Mexico we have architectural exhibits, open lectures, panel discussions, T.V. programs pointed toward the education of the general public, but our real emphasis has been within the University.

This year we have sixty-seven freshman architects — fifty from New Mexico. As we educate larger numbers of architects, some of them will work with builders, F.H.A., government and in other positions in which architectural knowledge is needed. The schools cannot be satisfied with the education of architectural students alone. It must educate every student. This must be done: first, by building good architecture so that he can experience it; second, by requiring architectural service courses; third, by exhibits, lectures and panel discussions.

At the University of New Mexico we are trying to point out the fallacy of historical facadism. How much progress we will make in this direction is not known.

This year we have initiated an architectural seminar for graduate students in which we discuss the creative processes in architecture, art, music, sculpture, dance and poetry. This course is being taken by graduates in education whose architectural attitude will affect our children, and by business administration students, the future clients for commercial buildings.

In Contemporary Architectural History we have an enrollment of thirty-seven students, only one-half of which are architectural majors.

We are beginning to make progress in architectural education for all, but we cannot rest. We must continue our efforts, for in this way the appreciation of architecture will spread and this only can improve the architecture of the future.

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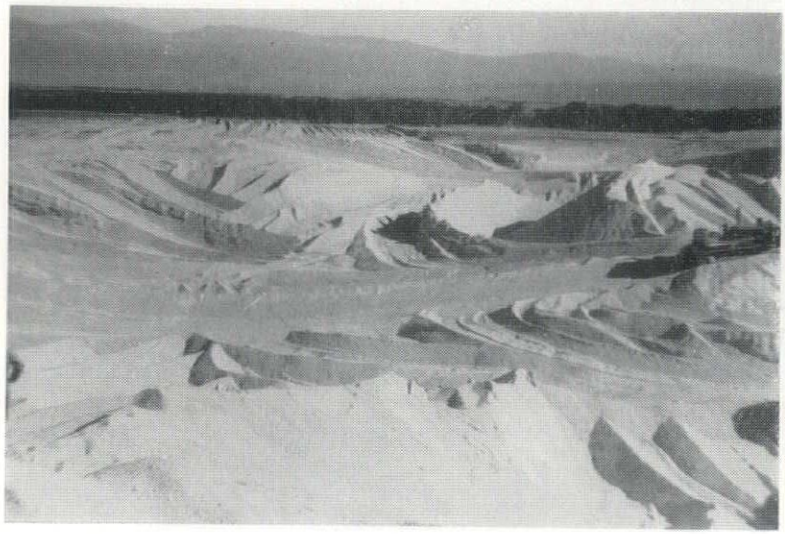

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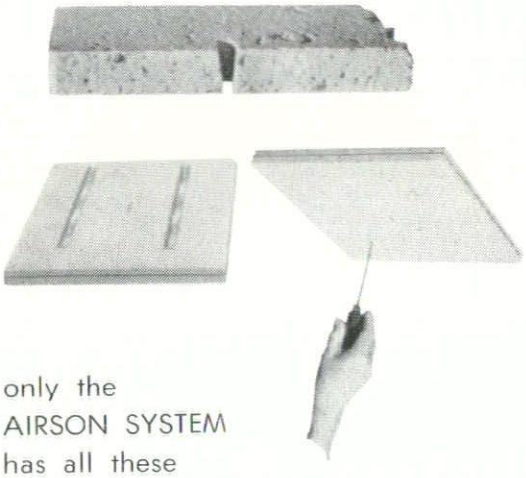

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**readings** —*continued from page 7*

Whether we really like to admit it or not this general lack of intellectualism has had a tremendous effect on our architectural scene. One outcome of this has been the influence of photography on architecture. It is not at all unlikely that in future years men will look back on our present architectural scene and label it "photographic." A large percentage of our current buildings seem to be designed not as places to live or to work in, but as objects which will appear at their best in a photographic plate. Even in those organic buildings which basically deny the importance of the camera are presented in our publications by photographs which have been taken from certain positions and angles that under normal circumstances would never be seen, even by the architect himself. A new client, then, has arrived in the architectural scene, and this client is the photograph, printed and circulated in our many national and regional books and magazines. Perhaps in the end they who have said that "a picture equals a thousand words," are correct, but in architecture they have been proved correct in a sense far different from what they had ever envisaged.

It could be suggested that a creative and human orientation for architecture might better be served by the media of the word, spoken and written, for in the end, there is less likelihood that one would confuse the needs and goals of the language of words with the language of architecture. *David Gebhard*


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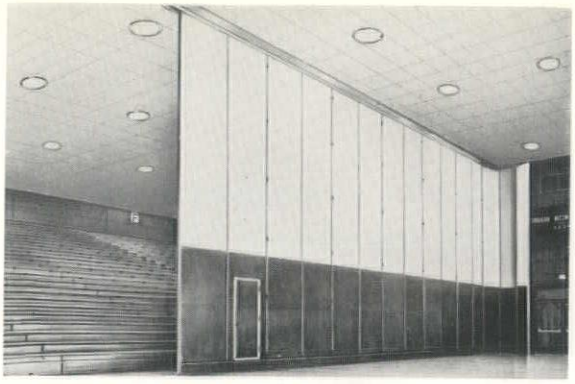

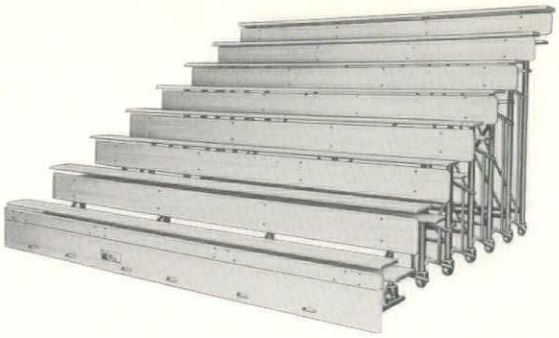

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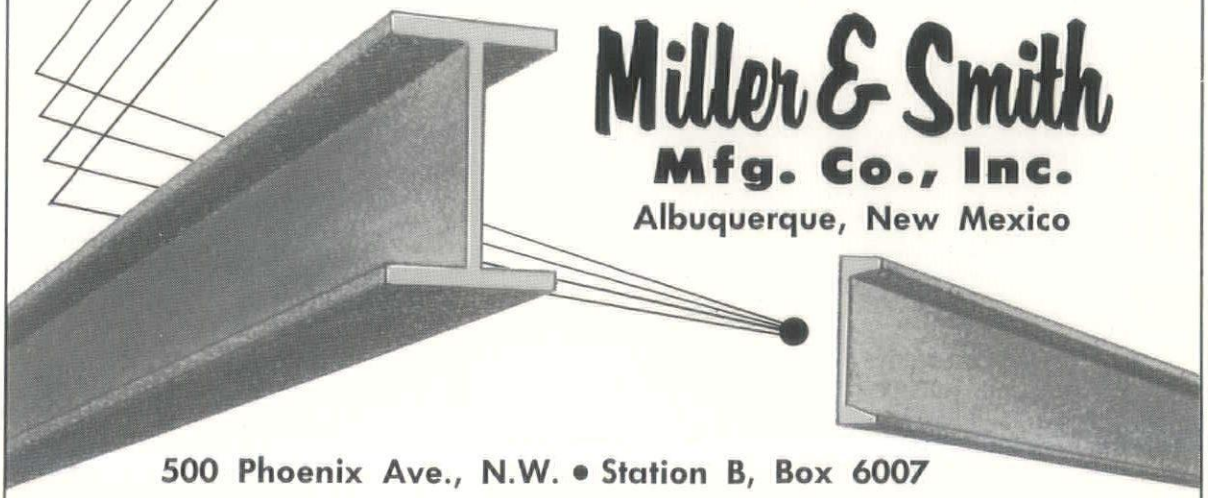

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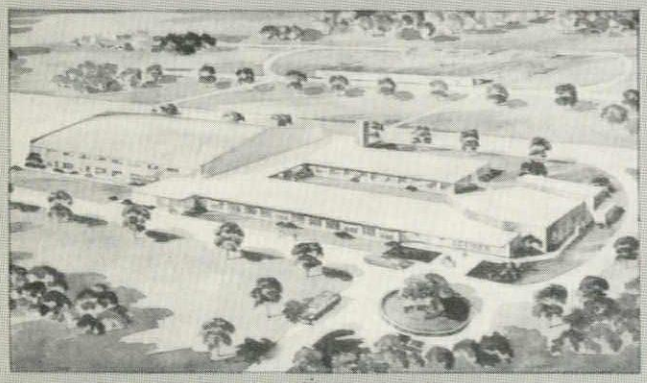

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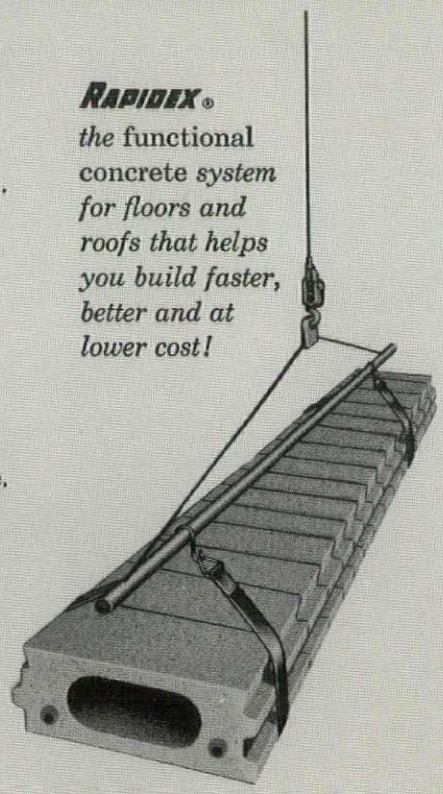

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